

Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP)

Steering Committee Meeting

June 15, 2007, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Resources Agency Bldg., Room 1131

Meeting Notes

Associated documents/handouts:

- Agenda
- Science process (hard copy only)
- Potential science advisors (hard copy only)
- Proposed advisor workshop (hard copy only)

Action Items and Key Decisions

- Membership Workgroup will complete second-round interviews with applicants shortly, and will make recommendations on whether to add members at next SC meeting.
- Outreach Workgroup is developing a Request for Proposals for an outreach consultant, a Notice of Intent for the Federal Register for the BDCP HCP, and will work with Resource Agency staff on a BDCP outreach PowerPoint presentation.
- Science facilitators will begin contacting potential science advisors to discuss their availability and expertise and will bring a shortened list to the next SC meeting
- Conservation options evaluation will be qualitative, based on flow guidelines developed in the coming week by NGO and PRE members to achieve conservation and export goals, respectively. Specific guidelines will be developed by CS Workgroup and proposed to SC at next meeting.

Updates

- Membership Workgroup will meet this afternoon for follow-up interviews with BDCP applicants, and will present recommendations at 6/29 SC meeting. See also Action Items and Key Decisions.
- Steve Thompson and Lester Snow presented Delta smelt and export pumps update:
 - Take of fish at the pumps has been very low. Currently Federal pumps are operating at 2500 cfs with no additional take; State pumps running on timed basis at 1100cfs. They may increase pumping early next week
 - Water operators group and the directors will meet Monday 6/18 to discuss next steps for managing near-term exports.
 - Exporters have been purchasing water from Stanislaus and Merced to increase flow.
 - Water temperature is critical for Delta smelt. When the average water temperature reaches 77°F (25°C), they are no longer viable and cannot survive; they leave the waters near the south Delta pumping plants and are not longer at risk of entrainment.
 - Director Snow commented that BDCP is the brightest hope for a developing a successful Delta conservation strategy, and encouraged the SC to work together to develop an action-oriented solution.

Review of meeting summaries

5/4 SC meeting notes were approved.

Outreach Workgroup

Karla Nemeth (co-chair) presenting. The Workgroup met last week for the first time. BDCP has a \$236,000 Section 6 planning grant as well as DLO monies to support outreach activities. At next SC meeting the Workgroup will present a draft Request for Qualifications for review by committee. They are also drafting a Notice of Intent in compliance with NEPA, which will be completed in July.

Next meeting will be held Thursday 6/21, location TBA. A regular Workgroup meeting time has not yet been set.

K. Scarborough noted that outreach efforts are important for BDCP, and to that end the committee needs to formulate an effective, clear message that can be presented to the public and interested groups, as needed. Resources BDCP staff will work with the Public Relations staff and Outreach workgroup to develop a PowerPoint presentation to serve that purpose.

Conservation Strategy Workgroup

There was no CS meeting this week; instead, groups of stakeholders met to develop their recommended objectives and operational standards for the upcoming conservation options evaluation. Consultant team (SAIC) needs to receive guidance from the SC by the end of June on the approach to analysis they should take.

The evaluation results, along with other documents and information (e.g., DRMS risk analysis, science advisors' report) will help the SC compare among the four current options and select an option that is most likely to advance the goals of the BDCP.

Further analysis will be undertaken to develop the Framework document at the end of 2007. Later still, the development of the conservation plan will be focused on the identification of specific conservation measures necessary to meet the goals and objectives of the BDCP. CEQA process will not begin until late 2008.

Anthony Saracino presented a proposal for the evaluation of options that was jointly developed among some members from PRE and NGO groups. The fundamental assumptions of the proposal are: 1) that the conservation option that is chosen through the evaluation process will be subject to rigorous analysis in HCP and CEQA process, and 2) that the analytical process needs to be informed by clearly defined objectives. The elements of the proposal include:

- 1) NGO and PRE groups develop their own sets of flow objectives to meet conservation and export needs, respectively.
- 2) Each group agrees to accept the other's proposal without judgment.
- 3) The evaluation would be qualitative, not include any new hydrodynamic model runs (e.g., CalSIM) or extensive quantitative analysis.

Discussion

There was general consensus that the proposed approach is appropriate for this evaluation. See also Action Items and Key Decisions. There was extensive discussion about the analytical approach. Specifically, some members suggested that stressors other than water exports be included (e.g., toxics, invasive species, predators, climate change). There was general recognition that the analysis needs to be defensible but that it is premature to engage in intensive quantitative analysis, and that there will be more in depth analysis during the development of a conservation plan.

Water quality will also need to be considered during future analyses; the State Water Resources Board was represented at the meeting today and may play a larger role in BDCP in the future.

CS will meet this Monday and 6/25 so that by 6/29 next SC meeting an approach to the evaluation of options will be further developed.

Independent science process

Today is the deadline for feedback to Resources Agency by BDCP SC members on the list of potential science advisors.

Bruce DiGennaro (BDCP science advisors facilitator) presenting. He reviewed three documents with the SC (see also Handouts and Associated Documents):

- 1) *BDCP Science Advisory Process*. The science facilitators, B. DiGennaro and Wayne Spencer (by phone), presented the first draft of this document at the last SC meeting, and received one comment from members in the interim. Their goal is consensus agreement on the process from members. The document will remain open for comments and discussion. Based on the received comment, they updated language regarding input to the science advisors from BDCP members. The previous draft of the document stated that the science facilitators would maintain “sole discretion” in determining what questions are considered by the advisors. That language was changed to: “Facilitation Team will recommend” questions. The current draft contains new language to the effect that in their reports science advisors will note communications with other scientists on BDCP issues and will further note where they use unpublished information in preparing the report.

- 2) *Potential Science Advisors list*. There are some new names on the current document. Facilitators will begin contacting those individuals on the list shortly. Advisors will be selected based on availability and subject-area expertise. The document will not be made public for personnel management reasons. The role of the advisory group is to provide early input to the BDCP process, not to act as a review body for planning documents. They will be convened for 1-3 days, then will write a report on the process. There may be limited additional engagement of science advisors after their report is completed, depending on BDCP needs. Today is the deadline for comments to Resources Agency on list of potential advisors. See also Action Items and Key Decisions.

3) Draft guidelines for questions to the science advisors. He noted that this is very preliminary, not yet reviewed by the Lead Scientist, and was designed to spur thinking from the SC members. Facilitators request input on the document from the group as soon as possible.

Discussion

Farm Bureau suggested a 3-stage process for developing questions to address to the science advisors:

- 1) Review other HCP's/NCCP's, guidance documents for scope.
- 2) Rule out questions that are not applicable
- 3) Iteratively develop questions based on the unique, key aspects of BDCP goals.

W. Spencer noted that in addition to Covered Species there are sometimes planning species that are important. HCP/NCCP is not just about take permits, but also about health of the system overall, so there may be species that are biologically and/or economically important that should be considered. The members and SAIC agreed that the list was likely to expand based on the Conservation Strategy Option chosen.

Science Workgroup will meet again to discuss this issue, time and place TBA.

Public Comments

No comments today

Next Meeting

Friday, 6/29/07. Same time and location.

Attendees

Introductions

Tom Howard (State Water Resources Control Board)
Will Stelle (Resources Agency)
John Hewitt (CFFB)

By phone

Jenny McGregor (EBMUD)
Ann Hayden (Environmental Defense)
Kenny Watkins (CFFB)
Steve Rothert (American Rivers)
Jerry Johns (DWR)
Tom Birmingham (Westlands Water District)
Bill Boyd (TNC)
Wayne Spencer (Conservation Biology Institute, BDCP Science Facilitator)

Representatives

Karen Scarborough (Resources Agency)
Laura King Moon (State Water Contractors)

Paul Cylinder (SAIC)
Will Stelle (Resources Agency)
John Hewitt
John Engbring (USFWS)
Steve Thompson (USFWS)
John McCamman (DFG)
Russ Strach (NOAA)
Leo Winternitz (CALFED)
Anthony Saracino (TNC)
Tracy Ligon (Santa Clara Valley Water Agency)
Brent Walthall (Kern County Water Agency)
Jeffrey Russell (Mirant Energy)
Dale Myers (Zone 7 Water Agency)
Randall Neudeck (MWD)
Frank Michny (USBR)
Marc Ebbin (Resources Agency)
Cindy Darling (Resources Agency)
Lester Snow (DWR)
Sue Ramos (Westlands Water District)
Ara Azhderian (SLDMWA)

Additional Attendees

Kathy Kelly
Bruce DiGennaro (Essex Partnership, BDCP Science Facilitator)
Serge Birk
Sasha Gennet
Pete Rawlings
Jenna O'Neill
Walt Ward
Scott Cantrell
Nick Konovaloff
Kevin Shaffer
Russ Ryan
James Roberts
Tim Smith
Dave Zezulak
Ted Myers
Rosalie Del Rosario
Carl Wilcox
Michelle Morow
Cathy Cruthers
Judy Bendix
Neil Clipperton
Cliff Schulz
Dave Forkel
Laura Simonek

Gary Bobker
Ken Trott